

SECTION 2

Reading for Understanding

► Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

Despite the Continental Army's difficulties, the Patriots triumphed at Saratoga.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The expansion of the war weakened the British by forcing them to spread their military resources around the world.

► Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

Marquis de Lafayette (mahr•KEE•deh laf•eye•EHT) French aristocrat who volunteered to serve in Washington's army

Valley Forge site in southeast Pennsylvania where Washington and his army camped in the winter of 1777–1778

George Rogers Clark frontiersman who helped defend the Western frontier

John Paul Jones sea commander who attacked British ships near the British coast

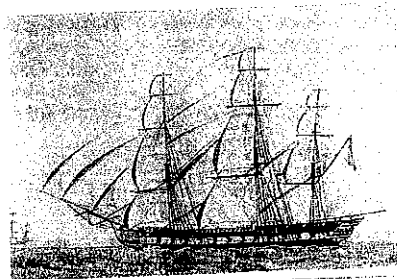
Wilderness Road a trail into Kentucky

BACKGROUND VOCABULARY

ally (Al•eye) a country that agrees to help another country achieve a common goal

desert (duh•ZERT) to leave military duty without permission

privateer (pry•vuh•TEER) a privately owned ship that has been granted permission by a wartime government to attack an enemy's merchant ships



photograph courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum

Visual Vocabulary
privateer

► Reading Strategy

Recreate the diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the center box to record the main idea; use the outer ovals to note important details. Add ovals or start a new diagram as needed.

See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R2.

MAIN IDEAS AND DETAILS

Other nations
join the war.

The War Expands



The War Expands

One American's Story

In 1778, General Washington hoped to take Newport, Rhode Island, from the British. The French had just entered the war, and their fleet had arrived to help the Americans. But a storm damaged the ships, and the Americans retreated, pursued by the British. A regiment of African Americans saved the day by holding the enemy at bay. An eyewitness described the bravery of the all-black First Rhode Island Regiment.

PRIMARY SOURCE

“There was a black regiment in the same situation. Yes, a regiment of negroes fighting for our liberty and independence,—not a white man among them but the officers. . . . Had they been unfaithful, or given way before the enemy, all would have been lost. Three times in succession were they attacked . . . and three times did they successfully repel the assault, and thus preserve our army from capture.”

—Dr. Harris, a veteran of the Battle of Rhode Island

In 1778 the war was expanding on many fronts. Not only were some states allowing African Americans to enlist, but foreign soldiers began arriving to help the American cause.

Help from Abroad

KEY QUESTION Why did France and Spain enter the war?

The French were still bitter over their defeat by Britain in the French and Indian War, in which France lost its North American colonies. The French hoped to weaken the British by helping Britain's American colonies break free. In 1776, France began to give secret aid to the Americans. However, the French didn't become an overt American ally until the Americans had proved they could win a conventional battle against British forces. An ally is a country that helps another country achieve a common goal.



The First Rhode Island Regiment, by David R. Wagner

© David Wagner
<http://davidrwagner.com>

France and Spain Enter the War After hearing of the American victory at Saratoga, King Louis XVI of France publicly recognized U.S. independence. In 1778, France signed two treaties of alliance with the United States. By doing so, France went to war with Britain. As part of its new alliance, France promised to send badly needed funds, supplies, and troops to America.

In 1779, France persuaded its ally Spain to help the Americans, too. Spain was also Britain's rival. The Spanish governor of Louisiana, General Bernardo de Gálvez, acted quickly. He captured the British strongholds of Natchez and Baton Rouge in the lower Mississippi Valley. From there, his small army went on to take Mobile and, in 1781, Pensacola, in West Florida. These victories prevented the British from attacking the United States from the southwest. However, like France, Spain wanted more than just to help the United States. Gálvez's victories helped extend Spain's empire.

By entering the war against Britain, France and Spain forced the British to fight a number of enemies on land and sea. For instance, the British expected to have to fight the French in the West Indies, so they sent troops there. And thousands of British troops were busy fighting Gálvez in the west. The British now had to spread their military resources over many fronts.

ANALYZE Political Cartoons

This cartoon was published in London in 1779, a year after France had formed an alliance with the United States. In political cartoons, sometimes a nation is represented by a figure wearing clothes associated with that nation. For example, in 18th-century cartoons, a Native American symbolized America. Here, figures representing different nations surround a sleeping figure representing Great Britain.



CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Analyze Point of View** Why would the cartoonist have shown Britain as sleeping?
2. **Make Inferences** Why is Holland shown picking Britain's pocket?
3. **Synthesize** What is the basic meaning of the cartoon?

Skillbuilder
Handbook,
page R18.

Foreign Officers Arrive European military officers from France, Poland, and the German states came to Washington's aid. One of these was the **Marquis de Lafayette** (laf•eye•EHT), a 19-year-old French aristocrat who volunteered to serve in Washington's army. He wanted a military career, and he believed in the American cause. Soon after Lafayette arrived in June 1777, he was given the command of an army division and quickly gained Washington's confidence. Lafayette won his men's respect and love by sharing their hardships. Called "the soldier's friend," he used his own money to buy warm clothing for his ragged troops. Washington regarded him as a son.

Lafayette fought in many battles and also persuaded the French king to send a 6,000-man army to America. He became a hero in both France and the United States. Later he took part in France's own revolution.

Along with Lafayette came the Baron de Kalb, a German officer who had served in the French army. He became one of Washington's generals with a reputation for bravery.

▲ **MAIN IDEAS & DETAILS** Tell why France and Spain entered the war.



Marquis de Lafayette

Winter at Valley Forge

▼ **KEY QUESTION** How did Valley Forge transform the American army?

Help from France and Spain came when the Americans desperately needed it. As you have read, in late 1777 Britain's General Howe had forced Washington to retreat from Philadelphia. In the winter of 1777–1778, Washington and his army camped at **Valley Forge** in southeast Pennsylvania.

Hardship at Valley Forge On the march to Valley Forge, Washington's army lacked supplies. Many soldiers had only blankets to cover themselves. They also lacked shoes. The barefoot men left tracks of blood on the frozen ground as they marched.

The soldiers' condition did not improve at camp. Over the winter, the soldiers at Valley Forge grew weak from not having enough food or warm clothing. Roughly a quarter of them died from malnutrition, exposure, or diseases such as smallpox and typhoid fever. Because of this suffering, the name Valley Forge came to stand for the great hardships that Americans endured in the Revolutionary War.

Washington appealed to Congress for supplies, but it was slow in responding. Luckily, private citizens sometimes helped the soldiers. On New Year's Day 1778, a group of Philadelphia women drove ten teams of oxen into camp. The oxen were pulling wagons full of supplies and 2,000 shirts. The women had the oxen killed to provide food for the troops.

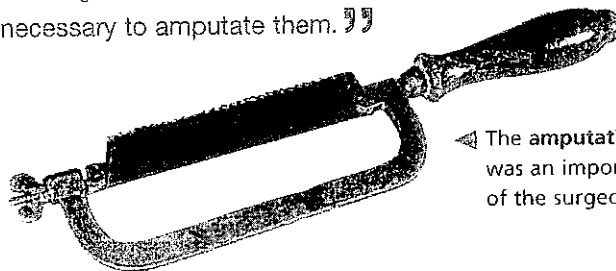
Patriotism Unites the Army Despite the hardships, American soldiers showed amazing endurance. Under such circumstances, soldiers often **desert**, or leave military duty without permission. Soldiers did desert, but Lieutenant

Daily Life at Valley Forge

A Deadly Winter

Due to poor planning, thievery, and muddy roads, supplies were lacking during the army's winter camp at Valley Forge. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 men died from exposure, disease, or malnutrition. According to the Marquis de Lafayette,

“The unfortunate soldiers were in want of everything; they had neither coats nor hats, nor shirts, nor shoes. Their feet and their legs froze until they were black, and it was often necessary to amputate them.”

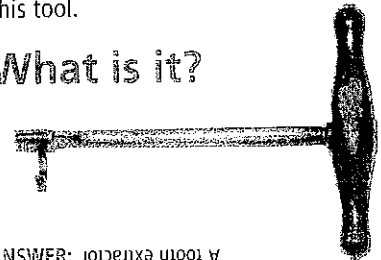


◀ The amputation saw was an important piece of the surgeon's kit.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

A soldier in pain hated to see a surgeon approaching with this tool.

What is it?



ANSWER: A tooth extractor

Data File

WHO	approx. 12,000 regulars, officers, and advisers	WHERE	25 miles NW of Philadelphia
WHAT	14' x 16' log huts housed 12 privates each; officers had more space, depending on rank	WHEN	Dec. 19, 1777, to June 19, 1778
		WHY	near major crossroads, with plenty of wood and water

HARDSHIPS AT VALLEY FORGE

In February, almost 5,000 soldiers were too sick to fight; another 3,700 lacked either shoes or clothes.

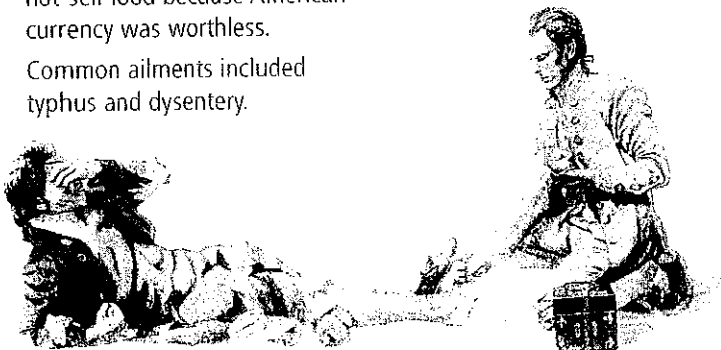
Shipments intended for troops were often stolen by government employees.

Many local farmers were Loyalist and refused to sell food to the army. Others would not sell food because American currency was worthless.

Common ailments included typhus and dysentery.

Desertions exceeded 2,000. By February, 8–10 men were deserting each day.

When frostbitten flesh dies, it turns black. The condition, called gangrene, can spread through the body and can be fatal. Amputations were performed without anesthetics or antiseptics, so amputees often died from infections anyway.



Colonel John Brooks wrote that the army stayed together because of the "Love of our Country." Once again, Washington's determination and patriotic vision inspired the troops to keep fighting.

The Army Grows Stronger Thanks to a German officer, the Baron von Steuben, the inexperienced American army was transformed into a skilled fighting force. Von Steuben began by forming a model company of 100 men. He taught them how to handle weapons properly. He also showed them how to fight the kind of formal battles favored by the British. (See Battle Tactics on page 202.) Within a month, the troops were executing drills with speed and precision. Because of this, the American army emerged from Valley Forge as a more efficient and stronger fighting machine.

▲ **SUMMARIZE** Describe how Valley Forge transformed the American army.

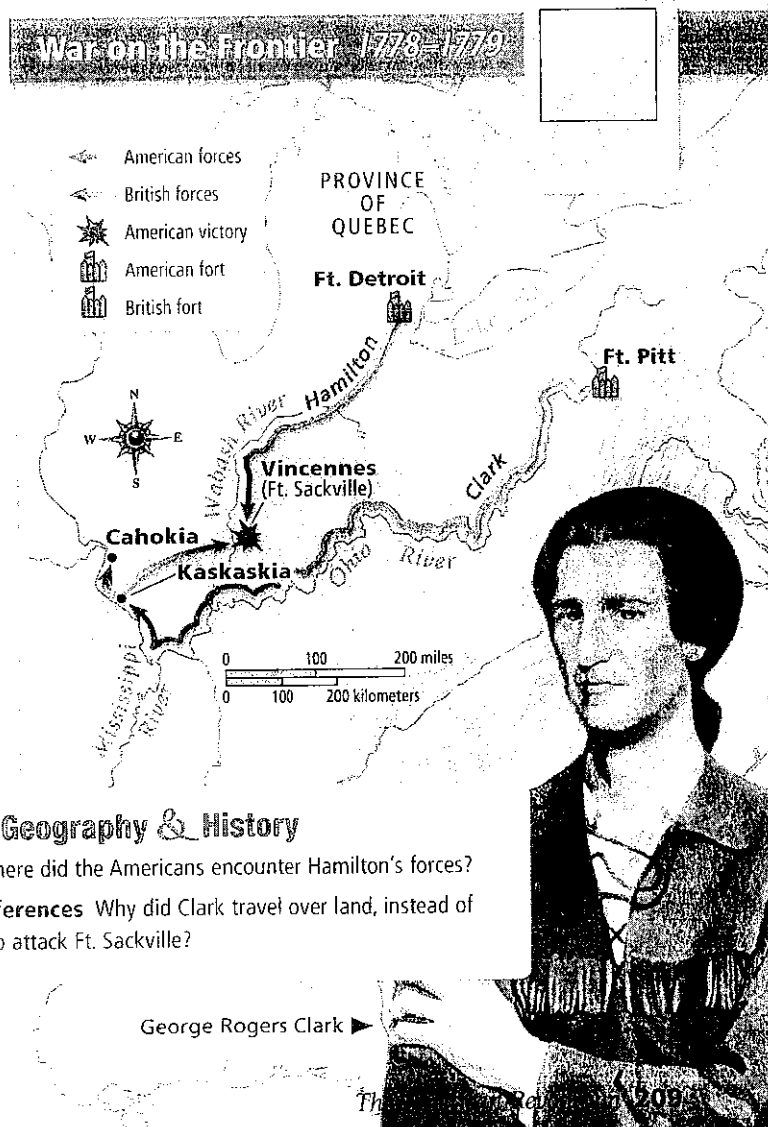
Frontier Fighting

▼ **KEY QUESTION** Why did the war spread to the frontier?

In the late 18th century, the region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River was known as the frontier; colonists had only just begun to settle there. In 1763, the British had tried to restrict settlement in this area and had built forts in the region. But some believed that the frontier should be open to settlement. In 1775 Daniel Boone helped build the **Wilderness Road**, a trail into Kentucky. Because Kentucky was claimed by Virginia in 1777, 24-year-old Kentuckian **George Rogers Clark** persuaded Virginia's governor, Patrick Henry, to allow him to raise an army to capture British outposts on the Western frontier. Clark wanted to expand the war into the frontier by attacking the British and their Native American allies in what is now Indiana and Illinois.

Clark's Army In May 1778, Clark led a group of frontiersmen to Kaskaskia, a British fort guarding the Mississippi River. They captured Kaskaskia without a fight.

Then they moved east to take Fort Sackville at Vincennes, in present-day Indiana. Earlier, a small force sent by Clark had taken Vincennes, but British forces under Henry Hamilton had recaptured it. Settlers called Hamilton the "Hair Buyer" because he supposedly paid rewards for American scalps.



Connect Geography & History

1. **Place** Where did the Americans encounter Hamilton's forces?
2. **Make Inferences** Why did Clark travel over land, instead of by river, to attack Ft. Sackville?

Connecting History

Expansion

Europeans would continue to settle and claim lands in the West until they reached the Pacific Ocean. You will see this theme emerge when you study westward expansion in later chapters.

Americans Seize the Frontier Determined to retake Fort Sackville, Clark and his men set out for Vincennes from Kaskaskia in February 1779. Hamilton wasn't expecting an attack because the rivers were flooding the woods. But Clark's men slogged through miles of icy swamps and waded through chest-deep water. They caught the British at Vincennes by surprise.

When Hamilton and his troops tried to remain in the fort, Clark pretended to have a larger force than he really had. Clark also executed some Native American allies of the British in plain view of the fort. He threatened to do the same to the British unless they surrendered. Frightened, the British gave up.

Clark's victory gave the Americans a hold on the vast region between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River (even though Fort Detroit on Lake Erie remained in the hands of the British). This area was more than half the total size of the original 13 states. The expansion of the war into the frontier also had another consequence: it forced the British again to spread their troops over a larger area and further weakened the British war effort.

🗺️ **CAUSES AND EFFECTS** Explain why the war spread to the frontier.

War on the Waves

🗺️ **KEY QUESTION** How did Americans expand the naval war?

The war expanded not only west into the frontier but also eastward to the high seas. By 1777, Britain had over 200 warships off the American coast. This allowed Britain to control the Atlantic trade routes to European markets.

British Trade Disrupted Because the American navy was small and weak, Congress encouraged American **privateers** to attack British merchant ships.

A privateer is a privately owned ship that has been granted permission by a wartime government to attack an enemy's merchant ships. After capturing a ship, the crew of a privateer sold its cargo and shared the money. America commissioned more than 1,000 privateers to prey on the British. They captured hundreds of ships, causing British merchants to call on their government to end the war.

Though outnumbered, the Continental Navy scored several victories. A daring officer named **John Paul Jones** inspired Americans by sailing across the Atlantic to attack British ships along the coast of Britain itself.

"I Have Not Yet Begun to Fight" In 1779, Jones became the commander of a ship named *Bonhomme Richard*. With four other ships, he patrolled the English coast. In September, Jones's vessels approached a convoy in which two British warships were guarding a number of supply ships.

James Forten, who later became famous for his efforts to end slavery, joined a privateer at the age of 14.



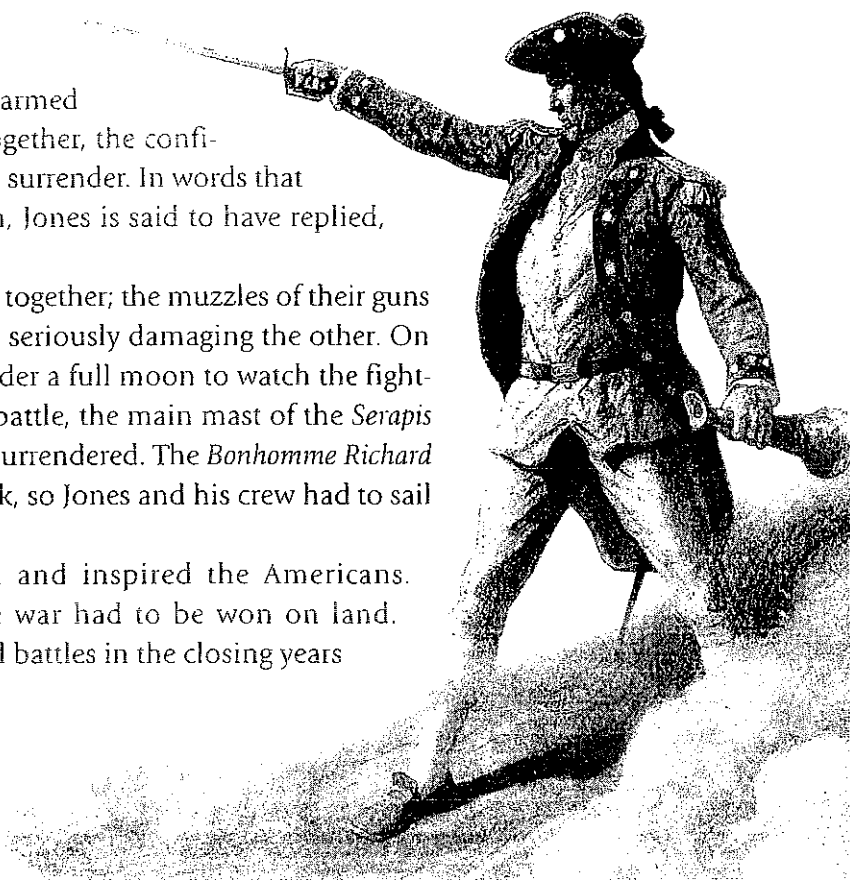
Jones closed in on the *Serapis*, the larger of the two warships. At one point, the *Bonhomme Richard* rammed the better-armed British vessel. As the two ships locked together, the confident British captain demanded that Jones surrender. In words that have become a famous U.S. Navy slogan, Jones is said to have replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!"

The two warships were virtually locked together; the muzzles of their guns almost touched. They blasted away, each seriously damaging the other. On the shore, crowds of Britons gathered under a full moon to watch the fighting. After a fierce three-and-a-half-hour battle, the main mast of the *Serapis* cracked and fell. The ship's captain then surrendered. The *Bonhomme Richard* was so full of holes that it eventually sank, so Jones and his crew had to sail away in the *Serapis*!

Jones's success angered the British and inspired the Americans. Even so, the Americans knew that the war had to be won on land. The next section discusses the major land battles in the closing years of the war.

- ▲ **SUMMARIZE** Explain how Americans expanded the naval war.

John Paul Jones,
by N. C. Wyeth



Section Assessment



ONLINE QUIZ

For test practice, go to
Interactive Review @ ClassZone.com

TERMS & NAMES

- Explain the importance of
 - Marquis de Lafayette
 - John Paul Jones
 - Valley Forge
 - Wilderness Road
 - George Rogers Clark

USING YOUR READING NOTES

- Main Ideas & Details** List the ways in which the war expanded from 1776–1779. For each, identify one key event and explain its importance.

Other nations
join the war.

The War Expands

KEY IDEAS

- List reasons why France decided to help America. Were Spain's reasons the same or different? Explain.
- How did foreign officers help General Washington?

CRITICAL THINKING

- Connect Economics & History** How did the alliance with France alter America's financial situation?
- Analyze Point of View** Why do you think so many Native Americans on the frontier supported the British?
- Connect Today** Why has Valley Forge remained an important symbol of America's heritage?
- Main** Research to find out how many soldiers fought in Washington's army during each year of the Revolution. Then calculate the average size of the army throughout the war.